

Gulf of Mexico Alliance Environmental Education Network Steering Committee

Conference Call Wednesday, August 8
Conference Call Wednesday, August 29 Continuation

Steering Committee Attendees

John Dindo, Dauphin Island Sea Lab
Gaye Farris, USGS National Wetlands Resource Center
Bryan Fluech, Florida Sea Grant
Sharon Hayes, Gulf of Mexico Program (GMP)
Phillip Hinesley, ADCNR State Lands Coastal Section
Tara Schultz, Texas Aquarium
Sharon Walker, Univ. of Southern Mississippi, JL Scott Aquarium
Ann Weaver, NOAA Coastal Services Center

Others

Linda Broussard, USGS National Wetlands Resource Center
Alison Hammer, NOAA Special Projects Office
Tabitha Stadler for Gary Lytton, Rookery Bay NERR
Terry Teague, Gulf of Mexico Program

Current Homework

- Bryan Fluech offered to review some experiential learning case studies and bring them before the Steering Committee. Sharon Walker offered to come up with some sources and contacts.
- Lee Yokel to solicit PIT representatives
- Sharon Walker to approach Dan Brook at the University of Southern Mississippi for interest in hosting the GOMA website/clearinghouse
- Alison Hammer will investigate costs for the website and clarification that NOAA SPO was only storyboarding the website
- Lee Yokel to query the EEN Workshop participants regarding their interest in a K-12 educational working group
- Terry Teague to contact Linda Broussard regarding online educational resources and what was already being captured by the USGS clearinghouse (i.e. especially in relationship to the listserv information)
- Sharon Hayes will get Lee Yokel contact information for Maggie Hunter at Coastal America.
- Sharon Walker would query the GCOOS board members for their preference of continued joint meetings with GOMA/GOMA EEN
- Lee Yokel will query the Steering Committee regarding future EEN meetings

Acronyms

AMT = Alliance Management Team
GOMA = Gulf of Mexico Alliance
EEN = Environmental Education Network

EEC = Environmental Education Coordinator
EOC = Education and Outreach Council
GCOOS = Gulf Coast Ocean Observing System
ICOSRMI = Integrated Committee on Science and Resource Management Integration
JOI = Joint Ocean Commission Initiative
MSDMR = MS Department of Marine Resources
NGI = Northern Gulf Institute
NMEA = National Marine Educators Association
PITs = Priority Issue Teams
RFP = Request for Proposals
STEM = Science Technology Engineering Math
UUP = Underserved and Underrepresented Populations
WC = Website/Clearinghouse

Agenda General Notes

1. Southern Governors Association/ICOSRMI

Lee Yokel and Phillip Hinesley have been working with the GOMA AMT on the upcoming Friday, August 24 & 25, 2007 ICOSRMI and Southern Governors Association meeting. They are putting together a presentation from states to brief these high level people on an overview of what we've done so far and the state perspectives of where we are going as a region. The states will be showcasing our successes, ongoing programs, and looking at future actions.

The Steering Committee was asked to give some input into the possible information that could be reported on behalf of the education priority issue team. It was also noted that all of the Steering Committee members should've received an invitation to participate in the event. The contribution from the group would be an opportunity to report results and outcomes as well as an opportunity to shine.

The group discussed a long term goal of having every child in the Gulf of Mexico watershed participate in experiential learning. These experiences should occur at different levels through the K-12 career. It was noted that there is a case study database of schools that offer this type of learning. The group felt that through these opportunities individuals would be better ocean stewards and make more STEM related course/career choices. The Steering Committee would like to see some studies regarding experiential learning (Bryan Fluech offered to review something). Sharon Walker offered to come up with some sources and contacts. The resource *Journal for Experiential Learning* was recommended as a starting point.

The other points that needed to be addressed to this high level audience were continued funding opportunities and the fact that all of the education goals were long term efforts that required continued support. This diligence would reflect upon stewardship and ocean literacy.

2. Engaging the Priority Issue Teams

Following up on the June EEN meeting, Lee Yokel opened the discussion on engaging the priority issue teams. She asked the group if they had any suggestions for representatives to each of the PITs.

She noted that there were several upcoming activities which would require immediate participation in some fashion from the representatives. These included a Resiliency meeting September 17, Water Quality meeting September 25, and a Harmful Algal Bloom workshop in November.

Sharon Hayes volunteered for the new Coastal Resiliency PIT. The EEC would approach Kris Shipman and see if she wanted to continue as the WQ representative. She also noted that she would put out a request on the listserv or solicit people by other means. Quenton Dokken was listed for Restoration and he would be approached for his continued involvement.

It was noted that NOAA was hoping for an FY08 \$5m appropriation. If that is to come through then other EEC type positions would be funded for the other PITs. With these in place, the representatives could work through them. Sharon Hayes said it might be possible for the GMP to support some travel.

Once the liaisons were identified the following process would be used to formalize their involvement in the PITS.

1. ID liaison for each PIT
2. Initial meeting/call with reps to determine some basics for interacting with EEN/PIT so as not be too time consuming
3. Liaisons review recommendations from the EEN meeting & picks top three “low-hanging fruit” to work with PITs on
4. Proposes top three to state leads for the PIT – or – work through list with PIT to pick something
5. Liaison works with EEN to find proper people to help with top thing chosen as well as volunteers from PIT
6. Look for completion of project in six months

4. Messaging Activities

The EEN is engaged in a messaging development activity through the JOCI as represented by the Meridian Institute and Spitfire Strategies. This relationship is supporting a number of public awareness activities with GOMA. The Steering Committee was notified they would be receiving homework that would help in the development of materials for the first phase of a public awareness campaign funded through the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. The three questions would essentially be:

1. Please supply your top three favorite problems related to one or more of the above themes.
2. Please provide information for source material which is associated with the problem you stated.
3. Please list a behavior change you would like to see associated with the problem(s) you stated and the intended target audience. The change, ideally, should be a result that can be measured, monitored, or traced in some fashion.

5. Website/Clearinghouse Update

The current status of developing an EEN website and clearinghouse was updated. A short list of people involved and some had been identified in the July GOMA “All-Hands” meeting in St. Petersburg, Florida. Lee had begun drafting the WC strategy and Tabitha Stadler would be helping with the initial work. From there, the material would be circulated to the Steering Committee. Lee also noted that Dr. Bill Walker was approaching the State of Florida to the nature of the public URL.

There was some discussion that a host for the site had yet to be identified. Sharon Walker offered to approach Dan Brook at the Mississippi State University who was the head of Instructional Technology. Given that MS is the lead on NGI it was felt there maybe a nice match. There was also discussion regarding “why” the website could not be hosted by a federal agency.

Cost of hosting the site was another factor that needed to be considered. Alison Hammer said she would investigate some initial costs. Whoever took on the role of hosting the site would ideally already have some technical facilities and expertise to take on the program. One point person would be needed to who understands the Alliance and could be paid to update the site. They also need to be involved in the storyboarding aspect of the initial site development plans.

The other component of the action item is the clearinghouse. The USGS continues to build their database and will continue to do so, hosting this segment and providing a link through whatever is developed.

The conference call was concluded on this point and scheduled to reconvene on August 29, 2007 at 2PM CDT.

In a follow-up update to this initial report, three entities were identified as having an interest in hosting the WC. There are: David Shaw, Northern Gulf Institute; Dan Brook, MSU; and Sharon Mesick, NCDDC. There were also discussions about where possible funding might be to support this effort.

Alison Hammer also wanted to be clear that NOAA Special Projects Office was going to help storyboard the website but not necessarily develop the technical aspects of it. Some of this would be left up to the host. She would investigate this further in her office.

6. Meeting Updates

a. The June 2007 Joint GCOOS EOC/GOMA EEN meeting – Lee Yokel reported that since the meeting she and Tami Wells (GCOOS EOC Outreach Coordinator) had met and developed a list of items to jointly work on. These were identified by the participants at the meeting. Tami would be presenting some of these items before the GCOOS board in early September. Some of the items identified were already underway and the two would make an effort to try to get the information to the meeting participants. Some examples of what Tami and Lee would work on included fact sheet development and links to information. Over 60 participants attended the three day meeting. The summary of the GOMA EEN portion of the meeting had been disseminated for review by the Steering Committee.

b. July 2007 “All Hands” Integration Meeting – The participants of the “All Hands” meeting identified some basic needs for upcoming funding possibilities. These included the need to continue funding on existing actions to take beyond the “pilot” phase. In addition, two new actions were identified.

The *first new action* is: “Priority Issue thematic workshops conducted with Gulf-wide collaborations and partnerships - include EEN conference support for sharing lessons learned.” Sharon Hayes reported she had drafted language for the next GMP RFP. There was significant discussion on partnering

across state lines for the grants. Applicants may be stronger if they are across states. Tabitha Stadler questioned is there a way to established groups in advance that would you like to work together. A program could be locally driven yet relate to Alliance themes with room to adjust topics from region to region. It was suggested that the programs have practical outcomes and that the same format be followed around the Gulf. Could there be a way to utilize some of the same similar resource people and connect other communities around the Gulf? The Rookery Bay NERR community workshops were cited as an example of what to do. Sharon Walker described how the COSEE model worked for their workshops.

The output of recent conferences provided new language in RFP. This would go to the State Leads (Phillip Hinesley and Lee Yokel) and then be circulated to the work group as necessary. That would be an opportunity to establish calls for potential partnering opportunities. It could jump start other actions as well as new ideas. It was also suggested that people look for funding that related to one fiscal years worth of work. Apply with enough for two years and maybe the next year will be funded again too – a number of issues will be addressed though this is uncertain.

The *second new action* is: “Develop, review, and compile existing environmental education outreach programs around the Gulf of Mexico and contribute this to the EEN, the website/clearinghouse, and other interested groups.” There was no significant discussion on this action and the group accepted it without change.

c. National Marine Educators Association update was provided by Sharon Walker. She reported what a wonderful conference it always is and encouraged other to participate in the future. A question was asked, “Are they aware of GOMA?” Sharon said yes and that GOMA is getting a lot of publicity. GOMA is keeping our priorities in line with everyone else’s’ and the synergies are working well.

d. CZM07 update was given by Alison Hammer. She attended the GOMA session which was presented by Margaret Davidson, Bill Walker, Bryan Griffith, and Phillip Hinesley. The overview was similar to the “All Hands” meeting in St. Petersburg. It was a high level presentation presented before a standing room only crowd. The conference is fairly big, attended by state, federal, NGOs; some international; and private industry exhibitors.

e. Southern Governors Association Meeting was reported on by Sharon Walker. She noted a number of high ranking state and federal officials were present. Some these people included Bob Ballard FLDEP; Margaret Brady and Jim Conaughton CEQ; Ben Grumbles EPA Office of Water; Paul Deremus NOAA NOS; Jack Dunnegan NOAA; Adm. Conrad Lautenbacher NOAA; Cameron Only Dept. of Interior; John Haynes and Terri Macpherson NASA; Paul Kelly JOCI member; EPA Region IV and VI regional administrators Palmer and Green; MS Senator Trent Lott among many. Governors present included AL Governor Bob Riley, LA Governor Kathleen Blanco, and MS Governor Haley Barbour who hosted the meeting.

State leads gave overviews of what they’ve been doing and their commitments to the Alliance on Friday. This was followed by a round table discussion with positive comments regarding the Alliance. They noted it was important to support pending legislation that reflected regional collaboration. Some of this legislation was initiated by Senator Lott and he hoped other State senators and congressmen would join him.

A 10-minute video overview of the Alliance was shown. Tina Shumate in MSDMR may have additional copies. The next steps for the Alliance would be building the plan beyond 36 months and focusing on coastal resiliency.

7. Funding Opportunities – Group Applications

The Gulf of Mexico Program will be issuing another round of RFPs for solicitation later this fall. It will address strictly GOMA related projects. See discussion above regarding group applications.

8. New Action Items

Two new actions were proposed at the GOMA meeting in St. Petersburg, FL, July 2007. See previous discussion in reference to this.

9. New Working Group – K-12?

At the June 2007 EEN workshop, participants had noted a need to develop a working group that would address the specific needs of the K-12 community. Lee Yokel opened the discussion stating she did not know what this group would look like or what it would accomplish. This would be up to the members of the group. The first thoughts from the group discussed the possibility of partnering with other organizations in the region rather than creating something new. Was it possible to have a representative to NMEA? There are other groups that focus on this – can we send our energy there? Rather than duplication have the state people focus inward and perhaps work with regional chapters for NMEA. Working through them might compliment what we are doing.

A lot of topics are potentially tied around each Gulf state. GOMA could compliment what others are doing. These groups are a collaborative response addressing the needs of formal and informal educators for content, activities and exhibitry. Coordination and sharing information around the groups would help them know about resources. There was quite a bit of discussion about standards and requirements for educational programs.

Other questions involved who would lead the group? What would they want to do? What would they want to accomplish? It was decided to ask the EEN meeting participants what they want to do? Some needs maybe reviewing models and case studies for sharing what we have to offer to high level state education representatives. These could be linked to the NOAA working website as well as shared with NMEA chapters, COSEE, and others.

Terry Teague offered the Gulf of Mexico Program website and an initial place holder for educational resources such as those that come out through the listserv and make them easy to access. To make sure these resources were not already being captured by the USGS, Terry would contact Linda Broussard.

10. Broadening Coastal Ecosystem Learning Centers (CELCS)

Sharon Hayes reported on the success of expanding the CELCs and the value these facilities have. She noted a lot of positive momentum and benefits of the new Smithsonian Ocean Hall exhibit coming, new CELCs, and the networking being established. She wanted to encourage other organizations

around the Gulf to apply to become a CELC and continue the network expansion. She also encouraged additional coordination and sharing of resources. Tabitha Stadler said the Rookery Bay NERR would probably apply. In order to facilitate information network with the Alliance Sharon Hayes would get Lee Yokel in contact with Maggie Hunter at Coastal America, the organization that oversees the CELCs.

11. Future Meetings & Steering Committee Call Schedule

Two issues that need to be addressed is the format of the yearly EEN workshops and the regular call schedules of the Steering Committee. The first discussion revolved around the best time and structure for the EEN meeting. Everyone agreed it would be helpful to align it with other stuff that is going on. Typically the GOMA as a whole meet once per year and typically in July. To use government per diem rates, July was good as the rates go down. At the same time, this is toward the end of the fiscal year and many do not have the budgets to support the travel. The group agreed to compile a list of what is going on and see what a good fit is for when to hold the meeting.

Structures for the meeting could include: a) an EEN best practices workshop with a pre-workshop meeting for a Steering Committee face to face; b) a joint meeting with another group; c) holding the EEN workshop at the same time as the Alliance all teams meeting; d) hosting face to face Steering Committee meetings at a different time in the year (maybe by teleconference?) and holding one best practices workshop when it fits best in the schedule. Lee Yokel noted the time to begin planning these efforts is now.

Other conferences noted were the Gulf Guardian Awards at the Clean Gulf Conference in November and the regional NSTA meeting. Lee Yokel would send out an email to the Steering Committee asking for 1. Time of year to hold the workshop; 2. Possible venues to connect with or maybe conflicts; and 3. What the structure of meeting would look like.

Lee Yokel noted that the Alliance would be entering another planning period to establish the next steps of the Governors' Action Plan beyond the initial 36 months. She would be calling on the Steering Committee for support with this initiative.

The group requested a call regarding the WC in two weeks which was Wednesday 2PM CDT or 3PM EDT Sept. 12, 2007.

The group established a *regular conference call schedule* for the second Wednesday of the month. The tentative schedules follow as:

Wednesday, October 10, 2007, 2PM CDT

Wednesday, November 7, 2007 (the 14th is the Clean Gulf Conference)

Wednesday, December 12, 2007

Other calls would be established on an as needed basis and on specific topics as requested.

The group adjourned.

To view other Priority Issue Team Activities: <http://www2.nos.noaa.gov/goma>